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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 February 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Oil production destroys the livelihood of the people in Ogoniland, Nigeria

Petroleum was discovered in Ogoni at Bomu (Dere) in 1958; since then an estimated US 100 billion dollars worth of oil has been carted away from Ogoniland, Nigeria. In return for this, the Ogoni have no pipe-borne water, no electricity, very few roads, ill-equipped schools and hospitals and no industry whatsoever. Since 1985 the enviroment and with it the livelihood for about 500,000 Ogoni people have started to dissapear. Nowadays, the Ogoni countryside is no more a source of fresh air and green vegetation. It is the scene of one of the biggest oil desaster in the world. All around is death. Ogoni languages and Ogoni culture is dying. The Ogoni people, the animals and the fishes of the Ogoni are dying because of all the years of hazardous enviromental pollution and resulting food scarcity.

For a long time we have been working now for the rights of the peoples of Ogoniland, Nigeria and we are deeply concerned about the serious violation of huma rights, humatarian law and although envirometal law being preperated on the ground. The situation is getting worse in the last years.

Regarding their environment the Ogoni have no opportunity to live how they used to live for hundreds of years. Their livelihood based on fishing, hunting, farming and collecting has been destroyed. Also they lack education, health and other social facilities. It is intolerable that one of the richest areas of Nigeria should wallow in abject poverty and destitution.

The UNEP Report of Ogoniland (UNEP Enviromental Assesment of Ogoniland) and its recommendations were designed improve the situation in the state of the Nigerdelta. First released in August 2011, UNEP's Report was one of the most comprehensive assessement of its kind undertaken in the Niger Delta. The study found that oil contamination in Ogoniland is extensive, with pollution penetrating further and deeper than previously thought. This report shows the ecological, the medical and the social consequences of the oil production.

In addition to enacting emergency measures to combat immediate harm to communities from the pollution of drinking water, the report called for an initial funding of US$ 1 billion to implement an enviromental clean-up in Ogoniland. At the time of release, UNEP noted that the enviromental restoration of Ogoniland could prove to be the world most wide-ranging and long-term oil clean up exercices ever undertaken with a duration of about 30 years.

The UNEP Report and its implementation have been the key issue at the two day stakeholder meeting held in Geneva on 24-25 November 2014. The president of MOSOP, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni Peoples, Mr. Legborsi Saro Pyagbara, and a 16 member Ogoni delegation participated in the meetings.

Convened by Mrs. Diezani Alison Madueke, Nigeria's Minister of petroleum Ressources, and facilitated by UNEP the meeting should mark an important moment for the large-scale clean up in Ogoniland. In addition to UNEP, the UN Development Programm, the UN Office for Project Service, and the UN Institute for training and research were also present. This prosess should ensure that the voices of the Ogoni peoples, as well as the Government of Nigeria and oil companies have been heard.

To his disappointment Mr. Legborsi Saro Pyagbara disclosed on Wednesday, 28th January 2015, that all promises given by the government during the Geneva Talks have not been kept until now. The goverment's commitment to start in January 2015 with the clean-up on of Ogoniland hasn't yet been implemented. Mr. Pyagbara mentioned that he hasn't heard anything from the government since the meetings in November and that there exists no real plan how and when the government will start with the rehabilitation.

Since the publication of the UNEP report four years ago the situation on the ground has not really changed. According to other human rights organizations like Amnesty International or Friends of the Earth Nigeria only 3 of the 27 measures for the long term oil-clean up displayed in the UNEP Report have started.

The UNEP Report is the only report about the situation in Ogoniland composed by the UN who could be the basis for restoring the enviroment in Ogoniland. To achieve this goal the Nigerian authorities and the oil companies must take responsibility to carry out the UNEP recommendations.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the Human Rights Council to urge all responsible parties in Nigeria:

- The proposals of the UNEP Report to improve and to re-establish the livelihood in Ogoniland must be fulfilled
- The long-term oil clean up should start as quickly as possible
- The responsible parties like the oil companies and the Nigerian authorities must take up their responsibilities
- The Ogoni people should have a voice about the land use and the oil production; they demand political autonomy. Autonomy which will guarantee them certain basic rights essential to their survival as a people
- The right to the control and use of a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development